

under a commander's charismatic leadership; some are frustrated with local leaders. So I believe there is significant potential to go after what I would call mid- and low-level Taliban fighters and leaders and offer them reintegration into Afghanistan under the constitution.

But this game-changing possibility was apparently not factored into General McChrystal's assessment. There is no plan yet to put in place a Sons of Iraq approach in Afghanistan. It is urgent that we lay out the steps that need to be taken to involve local and national Afghan leaders in that effort. They alone can accomplish this crucial job, but first we and our Afghan allies must draft such a plan on an urgent basis, and the potential positive impact of such a plan should be taken into account as we consider the need for any additional U.S. military resources.

Afghanistan's people are grateful for our aid but also eager to assume responsibility for their own future. In a tiny village in Helmand Province, we were invited to meet with the village elders at their council meeting—called a shura. A group of 100 or so men sat on the floor and chatted with us about their future and their country's future. When asked how long the United States should stay, one elder said: "Until the moment that you make our security forces self-sufficient. Then you will be welcome to visit us not as soldiers but as guests."

Helping Afghanistan achieve self-sufficiency and their own security is everybody's goal. On that, there is little difference of opinion in Afghan's village councils or in the corridors of this Capitol. Can we help Afghanistan reach self-sufficiency in security fast enough? Can we get there in a way that regains the initiative and creates the momentum we need? Can we encourage those lower level Taliban to abandon an insurgency headed by terrorists whose fanaticism they do not share? I believe we can, by supporting a far more rapid growth in the Afghan Army and police, by providing more trainers more quickly, by a rapid infusion of two Afghan units of equipment no longer needed in Iraq, and by rapidly adopting a plan for the reintegration of lower level Taliban fighters into Afghan society. In other words, we need a surge of Afghan security forces. Our support of their surge will show our commitment to the success of a mission that is clearly in our national security interest, without creating a bigger U.S. military footprint that provides propaganda fodder for the Taliban.

I believe taking those steps on an urgent basis, while completing the previously planned and announced increase in U.S. combat forces, provides the best chance of success for our mission—preventing Afghanistan from again being run by a Taliban government which harbors and supports al-Qaida, whose goal is to inflict additional catastrophic attacks on the United States and the world. I believe we should implement those steps before

considering an increase in U.S. ground combat forces beyond what is already planned by the end of the year.

I yield the floor and thank the Senator from Ohio as well.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank the chairman for his leadership.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, excuse me. I thought I would have time at 10:30.

Mr. BROWN. I will speak no more than 10 minutes, so you will be free to have the floor by 10:30. I will yield the floor well before 10:30.

Mr. BOND. The Senator said 2 minutes?

Mr. BROWN. No, up to 10 minutes, I was told.

Mr. BOND. May I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended? I need 15 minutes. I ask that morning business be extended for an additional 10 minutes to accommodate my colleague from Ohio.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, if the Senator would amend that to include the Senator from Florida as well?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask that the Senator from Ohio be recognized for 10 minutes, that I be recognized for 15 minutes, and that following that the Senator from Florida be recognized for 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 2 nights ago the President of the United States spoke in the Chamber down the hall on the other side of the Capitol. He did what he needed to do. As I have been in the House and Senate—the House for 14 years and the Senate now for 2½—it was the best speech I had ever seen in my time, sitting and listening to the last three Presidents. Most importantly, it explained why this health care bill is so important and why it works for those who already have insurance as it builds consumer protections around those insurance policies—

no more preexisting conditions, no more cutting people's care off because they have been too expensive, no more discrimination based on gender or disability or age or geography. It explained why this legislation makes sense for people who do not have insurance, who have been without insurance or who have inadequate insurance. It really explained well why this legislation is so important to small business.

I have come to this floor almost daily when we were in session the last few months, to share stories of Ohioans. I know the Presiding Officer, as he traveled in his State, in Northern Virginia and Richmond and Roanoke, has heard these stories and gets these letters, too, showing the depth of the problem. So many people don't have health care, and so many who do have insurance have seen significant problems. They have paid their premiums month after month. Then they get very sick, they may have to take biologic drugs, they may have long hospital visits, their health care may have cost \$100,000 or \$200,000, and their insurance company simply cuts them off. How is that fair?

Let me share some of these letters today for 7 or 8 minutes and then make some comments about them.

Yvon from Wakeman in Huron County in northern Ohio writes:

My husband, a union carpenter, was out of work for 7 months straight. He just went back to work in June on a week-by-week basis.

My husband must get 130 hours of work per month to get insurance. Otherwise, we have to keep paying for COBRA, which expires at the end of the year.

It is also expensive.

In June he earned 129½ hours and we were told that because it was not the required 130 hours, we had to pay out of pocket. We offered to pay for the ½ hour and were told no, we could not.

There is no way in the world we can afford to pay for private insurance. If my husband does not have enough hours, we will have no insurance. It goes month to month like that. I am a wife, mother, sister, cousin and aunt. I want to live.

She loses her insurance and can't get her insurance out of a technicality. These things will simply not happen under this health insurance legislation we are considering over the weeks ahead, where insurance companies can deny care for a whole host of reasons, where somebody might not qualify for health insurance. Yvon and her husband will be able to go in the health care exchange. They will be able to get into private care. They can get insurance, if they choose, from Aetna or BlueCross. They can work with their union plan that her husband apparently has as a carpenter or they can go into public option. She would have those choices.

Bob from Cleveland has been an owner of a steel processing firm since 1990 and has had to grapple with deteriorating health benefits over the last 5 years. His firm employs 30 employees, 20 of whom depend on the company's depreciating health care coverage